

University of Lowell

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U. LOWELL PROFESSORS AWARDED MAJOR NEH GRANT

LOWELL, MASS. - Two University of Lowell professors have received \$300,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities in one of the largest research grants ever awarded to the school. The NEH funds will be used to create an interdisciplinary humanities program called, "Culture and Technology."

The recipients of this prestigious grant, Dr. Veda Cobb-Stevens and Dr. Shirley M. Kolack, of the philosophy and sociology departments respectively, were supported two years ago by the NEH for a pilot program in this area. The initial grant made possible two course sequences for freshmen and sophomore students: Western Cultural Heritage I and II, and Technology and Human Values I and II.

The new grant will allow for expansion of these courses as well as the development of additional ones for upperclassmen. Eventually students will be able to minor in either Western Culture or Technology, Society, and Human Values.

"We hope to reach students who don't normally get to take courses in the humanities," said Dr. Kolack, adding that, "An interdisciplinary humanities program will greatly strengthen the status of the humanities at U. Lowell, as well as the sciences."

According to Dr. Cobb-Stevens, the Western Heritage component deals with philosophical and historical perspectives of the major eras of civilization, and exposes students to representative works of art and literature. "Besides developing a new course," said Dr. Cobb-Stevens, "we will be experimenting with new teaching techniques." She believes that having professors from various departments presenting material "can add greatly to the dimension of the course."

The participating faculty will be drawn from all departments of the College of Liberal Arts as well as humanistically oriented scientists and engineers from the College of Pure and Applied Science and College of Engineering. Professors will receive special training

over

through a three year series of summer workshops.

Technology, Society, and Human Values, headed by Dr. Kolack, introduces students to various technological advances and the effects these changes have on society. This course is team taught by a scientist, and engineer, and two humanists. According to Dr. Kolack, the program will be expanded, using the new NEH grant, to include seminars in which students will research technological problems and study the implications of these issues on human life.

Discussing student response to the program, Professors Cobb-Stevens and Kolack said, "Students consistently indicated that these courses had taught them to question and to think, not only about the past, but also about the present. As one student put it, 'Seeing the progression of man and his expressions, I see parallels in myself and why I am, who I am; why my environment grew to what it is and how I fit.'"

Dr. Veda Cobb-Stevens received her B.A. from the University of Kentucky, and her M.A. and Ph.D. from Boston College. She is the managing co-editor of the Phenomenology Information Bulletin, and is working on a second Masters in Classical Greek. Dr. Shirley M. Kolack has been a member of the Lowell faculty since 1967. She received her B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. from Boston University. Dr. Kolack is a past president of the Massachusetts Sociological Association, and has published widely.

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